

Message Text

PAGE 01 SAIGON 05262 01 OF 02 301158 Z

11

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 DPW-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

USIA-12 IO-12 EUR-25 RSR-01 AID-20 /139 W

----- 063409

R 300920 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9398

USDEL FRANCE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 5262

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: MILITARY REGION 2 AT X- PLUS-60

FOL TEL SENT SAIGON FROM NHA TRANG MAR 29, 1973 RPTD FOR YOUR
INFO:

QUOTE NHA TRANG 342

1. SUMMARY: SURVEY OF THE REGION AT THIS MILESTONE IN THE LIFE OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT YIELDS THESE GENERAL CONCLUSIONS: THE CEASE- FIRE SO FAR HAS PRODUCED LITTLE CONSTRAINT UPON MILITARY OPERATIONS BY EITHER SIDE, THOUGH THE OVER- ALL LEVEL OF VIOLENCE IS DOWN CONSIDERABLY. CONSEQUENTLY IT CANNOT YET BE SAID TO HAVE CHANGED SIGNIFICANTLY THE FACE OF THE WAR, EITHER IN THE HIGHLANDS OR ON THE CENTRAL COAST. ENEMY LAND- GRABS AT TIME OF CEASE- FIRE WERE RESISTED AND EVENTUALLY ROLLED BACK; BY MID- MARCH, GVN HAD ESSENTIALLY RESTORED LATE- JANUARY SITUATION AND IN SOME PARTS OF THE MR HAS NOW BEGUN TO OPERATE IN AREAS WHERE FOR LAST YEAR OR MORE IT HAS HAD LITTLE OR NO PRESENCE. IF GVN CONSIDERS ITSELF FREE TO OPERATE MORE OR LESS AT WILL, NVA/ VC RETAIN CAPABILITY AND FREEDOM TO DO LIKEWISE. ALTHOUGH AT THE MOMENT MR-2 IS MILITARILY THE QUIETEST OF THE REGIONS, MR AND DIVISION COMMANDERS AND PROVINCE CHIEFS ARE APPREHENSIVE OVER REPORTS OF LARGESCALE MOVEMENTS OF SUPPLIES AND TROOPS FROM THE NORTH. ALL OF THEM EXPECT, AND ARE DEVELOPING PLANS TO MEET, ANOTHER ENEMY
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAIGON 05262 01 OF 02 301158 Z

OFFENSIVE IN THE NOT- TOO- DISTANT FUTURE.

2. PEACE- KEEPING MACHINERY HAS YET TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY IN THE TWO TRUCE REGIONS (3 AND 4) OF THE MR. IN FACT, FPJMC NEVER REALLY GOT OFF THE GROUND, ALTHOUGH THE US ELEMENT MADE A SUSTAINED EFFORT TO SET IT IN MOTION, AND ICCS, HAVING ACHIEVED PRACTICALLY NOTHING DESPITE CANADIAN EXERTIONS, IN RECENT DAYS HAS ALSO BECOME MORE CLEARLY A HOUSE DIVIDED.

3. POLITICAL FORCES IN REGION REMAIN BASICALLY UNCHANGED. THE GVN POPULAR FRONT, PROCLAIMED SO LOUDLY ONLY A MONTH AGO, APPEARS ALREADY TO BE ON SHELF AND LIKELY TO BE TAKEN DOWN AGAIN ONLY IF NEED ARISES. IN PROMULGATING DECREE- LAW 060 AND PUSHING DEMOCRACY PARTY SO HARD, THIEU HAS AT LEAST CONFUSED AND PROBABLY ALIENATED (NEEDLESSLY, IN OUR OPINION) NATIONALIST PARTIES AND SOME NORTHERN CATHOLICS - GROUPS THAT WOULD HAVE SUPPORTED HIM IN THE CRUNCH ANYWAY. THIRD- FORCE ACTIVITY HAS CROPPED UP ONLY AMONT NON- COMMUNIST PROFESSIONAL OPPOSITIONISTS OF BINH THUAN AND IS NOT LIKELY TO GO VERY FAR IN THAT PROVINCE. NO CLEAR PATTERN OF NEW ENEMY POLITICAL ACTIVITY IS YET DISCERNIBLE IN THE CEASE- FIRE PERIOD; INTELLIGENCE SUGGESTS THAT THIS MAY BE DUE TO ENEMY' S INDECISION AS TO APPROPRIATE TACTICS TO EMPLOY. END SUMMARY.

4. WITH THE APPROACH OF X- PLUS-60, I ASKED TDY FSO' S AND OTHER POLITICAL REPORTING OFFICERS TO APPRAISE THE ENTIRE CEASE- FIRE PERIOD TO DATE IN ITS VARIOUS ASPECTS. THE WEALTH OF MATERIAL THUS ASSEMBLED WILL BE REPORTED IN A SERIES OF AIRGRAMS. MEANWHILE, I WISH TO REPORT THE FOLLOWING SYNTHESIS OF VIEWS:

5. IN TALKING ABOUT MILITARY HISTORY OF THESE 60 DAYS, IT SHOULD BE MADE CLEAR THAT ACTION HAS BEEN MINIMAL IN KHANH HOA, NINH THUAN, GAM RANH CITY, TUYEN DUC, LAM DONG, QUANG DUC AND PHU BON. FIRST FOUR HAVE LONG ENJOYED CONSIDERABLE SECURITY; OTHER THREE ARE SPARSELY POPULATED AND LOW ON PRIORITY LISTS OF BOTH SIDES. ISOLATED INCIDENTS HAVE OCCURRED IN ALL OF THESE PLACES, BUT THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE MILITARY ACTIVITY OF SIGNIFICANCE.

6. ENEMY' S LAND- GRABS IN PERIOD AROUND JAN 28 FOCUSED ON THE MORE STRATEGIC PROVINCES OF BINH DINH, PHU YEN, BINH THUAN, DARLAC, PLEIKU AND VIRTUALLY BELEAGUERED KONTUM. THEIR ATTEMPTS TO INTER- DICT LOC' S WERE ALSO CONCENTRATED IN THESE PROVINCES, PARTICULARLY ON QL-14 BETWEEN PLEIKU CITY AND KONTUM CITY.
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SAIGON 05262 01 OF 02 301158 Z

7. GVN EFFORTS TO RETAKE THESE AREAS WERE LONG AND FULL MONTH IN

BUON HO DISTRICT OF DARLAC, SIX WEEKS IN POPULATED AREAS OF CENTRAL PHU YEN - AND COSTLY TO BOTH SIDES. IN SOME PLACES, NVA/ VC APPEARED TO BE HANGING ON TO RECENTLY WON GAINS IN HOPE ICCS WOULD ARRIVE SOON TO RATIFY THEIR CONTROL, PERHAPS PLACING MORE HOPE IN THE INTERNATIONAL BODY THAN DID THE GVN. IF SO, POLES AND HUNGARIANS DID NOT GET THE WORD. ENEMY UNITS ULTIMATELY DREW BACK AFTER GVN COUNTERATTACKS, BUT NOT ALWAYS DEEPLY INTO BASE AREAS. IN

ALL THE PROVINCES WHERE THEY MADE A MAJOR MILITARY EFFORT AFTER JANUARY 27, THEY HAVE CONTINUED TO HUG THE FRINGES OF GVN- CONTROLLED AREAS. THIS IS ONE OF THE FACTORS THAT IS GIVING THE MR-2 COMMANDER MOST CAUSE FOR CONCERN AT THE MOMENT. VIRTUALLY NO ONE IN THIS REGION BELIEVES THAT THE WAR IS OVER. INDEED, CONTINUING EVIDENCE THAT THE NVA IS REMAINING, REPORTS OF HEAVY SOUTHWARD MOVEMENTS OF MEN AND SUPPLIES ALONG THE HO CHI MINH TRAIL, AND INDICATIONS THAT RECENTLY- RELEASED ENEMY POW' S ARE BEING INTEGRATED IMMEDIATELY INTO ENEMY UNITS, ARE CITED AS THE JUSTIFICATION FOR ANTICIPATING ANOTHER ENEMY OFFENSIVE, IF NOT WITHIN THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS AT LEAST WITHIN THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS.

8. THE ENEMY INITIATED NUMEROUS ATTEMPTS AT DIALOGUE WITH GVN OFFICIALS AND TROOP COMMANDERS IN THE FIRST FEW DAYS OF THE CEASE-FIRE; ALMOST ALWAYS THEY WERE REBUFFED. (IN MOST CASES THAT WE KNOW ABOUT, ENEMY PROPOSALS WOULD HAVE INVOLVED GVN ACCEPTANCE OF SEVERED LOC' S AND/ OR CESSIONS OF TERRITORY THAT THE GVN CLAIMED TO CONTROL.) BINH THUAN PROVINCE CHIEF REPLIED DIRECTLY TO THE ENEMY BY RADIO, THUS AVERTING A FIREFIGHT OR TWO, BUT ONLY CG OF 23 RD DIV IS KNOWN TO HAVE PURSUED THIS TYPE OF EXCHANGE OVER A PERIOD OF TIME. IN HIS CASE IT WAS INTERRUPTED FOR PERIOD DURING WHICH GVN APPARENTLY OUTLAWED ALL SUCH EXCHANGES, AND IT RESUMED ONLY UNDER NEW AUTHORITY GRANTED BY THIEU AT BEGINNING OF MARCH. ONLY CONCRETE RESULT SO FAR HAS BEEN UNILATERAL ENEMY RELEASE OF 14 WOUNDED ARVN PW' S IN KONTUM PROVINCE. OTHER PROVINCE CHIEFS AND TROOP COMMANDERS DISPLAY MARKED DISTASTE FOR ANY SUCH DEALINGS WITH THE ENEMY. WITHOUT EXCEPTION ALL ARE SKEPTICAL IF NOT CRITICAL OF PARIS AGREEMENT AND ABOVE ALL OF ENEMY' S " GOOD WILL " (AND WITH SOME REASON AFTER ENEMY' S CEASE- FIRE OFFENSIVE), BUT THEY HAVE NOT BEEN HEARD TO EXPRESS OPENLY THE SORT OF DERISION OF THE AGREEMENT THAT HAS SURFACED IN MR-3 AND PERHAPS ELSEWHERE.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 SAIGON 05262 01 OF 02 301158 Z

9. PEACE- KEEPING MACHINERY: THESE STRONG RESERVATIONS HAVE BEEN IMPLICIT IN GVN/ RVNAF CONDUCT TOWARD PEACE- KEEPING MACHINERY. ARVN ELEMENTS OF FPJMC IN TR' S 3 AND 4 WERE GENERALLY OF LOW QUALITY. GVN SHIRKED ITS RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROVIDING DRV/ PRG FACILITIES AND IN SOME CASES ALSO IN FINDING SITES FOR ICCS. ONCE ICCS FINALLY IN PLACE, FEW PROVINCE CHIEFS SAW THE OBVIOUS ADVANTAGE OF GETTING TO KNOW ICCS TEAMS AND HELPING THEM TO FAMILIARIZE THEMSELVES WITH AREA UNTIL THIS WAS POINTED OUT TO THEM - FIRST BY US THROUGHOUT FEBRUARY AND ULTIMATELY BY THIEU AT MARCH 6 MEETING WITH PROVINCE CHIEFS IN SAIGON. LOCAL AUTHORITIES NOT ONLY CONDONED DEMONSTRATION AGAINST DRV JMT DELEGATES AT BAN ME THUOT BUT ALSO PARTICIPATEADP000

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAIGON 05262 02 OF 02 302200 Z

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 DPW-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

USIA-12 IO-12 EUR-25 AID-20 RSR-01 /139 W

----- 068479

R 300920 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9399

USDEL FRANCE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 5262

FOL TEL SENT SAIGON FROM NHA TRANGE MAR 29, 1973 RPTD FOR YOUR
INFO:

QUOTE NHA TRANGE 342

10. THE ICCS IN TR'S 3 AND 4 LEAVES MUCH TO BE DESIRED. FIRST,
IT HAS TAKEN A GENERALLY LIMITED VIEW OF ITS ROLE, AND OFFICERS
OF SEVERAL TEAMS HAVE SAID (PERHAPS CORRECTLY) IT COULD NOT FUNCT-
ION VERY EFFECTIVELY IN ANY CASE WITHOUT AN OPERATIONAL FPJMC
ALONGSIDE
IT. SECOND, CANADIAN LEADERSHIP HAS PRODUCED WHATEVER ACTION THERE
HAS BEEN TO DATE, BUT TR3 DANDEL IN OUR VIEW IS RISKING LOSS OF
POTENTIAL EFFECTIVENESS BY ROTATING EACH MAN EVERY 16 DAYS (UNLESS HE
IS IN THE MIDDLE OF AN INVESTIGATION). INDODEL IN THIS REGION HAS NO
W
OPTED FOR 30- DAY CYCLE, WHILE POLDEL AND HUNGDEL PLANS REMAIN UNCLEAR
.

(IN TR 4, WHICH HAS NO HARDSHIP POSTS, CANDELS WILL ROTATE EVERY
60 DAYS.)

11. MOST SERIOUS OF ALL, HOWEVER, IS GROWING EVIDENCE OF IDEOLOGICAL
SPLIT ON VIRTUALLY EVERY INVESTIGATION. CANADIANS AND INDONESIANS
IN TR 3 WENT ALONG IN FINDING AGAINST GVN ON DUC CO AIRSTRIKE ALLE-
GATION IN HOPE THAT OBJECTIVITY MIGHT BE CONTAGEOUS, BUT THEY HAVE
NOW FOUND IT IS NOT. THIS IS ONLY REPORT FORWARDED TO SAIGON FROM
TR 3, ALTHOUGH ABOUT 40 OTHERS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED AND ANOTHER 100
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAIGON 05262 02 OF 02 302200 Z

INVESTIGATIONS ARE PLANNED. TR 4 ICCS IN ITS QUIETER AREA HAS BEEN
MUCH LESS ACTIVE, WITH ONLY A HANDFUL OF INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED
AND, WE BELIEVE, ONLY ONE INCONCLUSIVE REPORT FORWARDED TO SAIGON.
IN SHORT, NOW THAT INVESTIGATIONS HAVE GOTTEN UNDER WAY IN BOTH REG-
IONS, EAST EUROPEANS HAVE BECOME INTRACTABLE.

12. CANDEL IN TR 3 AND POSSIBLY NATION- WIDE HAS NOW CHANGED ITS
TACTICS (SUBJECT ON WHICH WE WILL BE REPORTING IN GREATER DETAIL

IN NEXT DAY OR TWO). TACTICS INCLUDE IMMEDIATE ACTION, WITH OR WITHOUT COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION; PROMPT REPORTS, AND SOLO OR MINORITY ONES IF NECESSARY; AND COMPLETE DOCUMENTATION FOR THE RECORD, TO SHOW WHOSE FAULT IT WILL BE IF ICCS ULTIMATELY FAILS OR IF CANADA DECIDES TO PULL OUT AFTER NEXT 60-90 DAYS. EVEN IF THESE NEW CANDEL PROCEDURES MAKE ICCS MORE VIGOROUS THAN IT HAS BEEN UP TO NOW, HOWEVER, WE CANNOT SAY WITH ANY CONFIDENCE THAT ITS PRESENCE OR ACTIVITIES WILL HAVE ANY REAL DETERRENT EFFECT ON LEADERSHIP OF EITHER SIDE.

13. " THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE": THIEU'S DEMOCRACY PARTY (DP) WAS ALREADY BEING PROMOTED VIGOROUSLY, AND IN SOME PLACES COERCIVELY, WHEN CEASE- FIRE CAME INTO EFFECT. THIS EFFORT CONTINUES, THOUGH NOT WITH UNIFORM ENERGY AROUND THE REGION , AND WE EXPECT THE DP WILL FLEX ITS MUSCLE IN VILLAGE ELECTIONS NOW BEING SCHEDULED IN SOME PROFUSION FOR MAY AND JUNE. NUMEROUS DP MEMBERS ON GVN PAY-ROLL, HOWEVER, ARE ALMOST EAGER TO MAKE POINT THAT THEIR JOINING WAS ACT OF PRUDENCE RATHER THAN OF CONVICTION, AND LEADERS OF NATIONALIST PARTIES WHOSE MEMBERSHIP HAS BEEN THUS RAIDED - MAINLY VNQDD AND RDV IN THIS REGION - HAVE EXPRESSED BITTERNESS OVER DP TACTICS. (INTERESTINGLY, HOWEVER, WE HAVE NOT HEARD MANY COMPARISONS OF DP TO DIEM'S CAN LAO.)

14. THESE SAME ESTABLISHED PARTIES AND OTHERS ARE ALSO ON THE ROPES BECAUSE OF DECREE- LAW 060, AND IN THE PROVINCES LOCAL LEADERS AND MEMBERS ARE OFTEN REDUCED TO PESSIMISTIC SPECULATION ABOUT PARTIES' FUTURE, IN IGNORANCE (EXCEPT FOR PRESS REPORTS) OF MANEUVERINGS OF THEIR SAIGON LEADERSHIP.

15. THE G

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 07 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 MAR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973SAIGON05262
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730348/abqcehah.tel
Line Count: 246
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags: ANOMALY
Review Date: 05 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05-Dec-2001 by martinml>; APPROVED <28-Dec-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> srp 980115
Subject: MILITARY REGION 2 AT X- PLUS-60
TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, VS
To: STATE
FRANCE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005